THE

DRAMATIC CENSOR;

OR,

Weekly Theatrical Report.

NUMBER XIX.

SATURDAY, MAY 10, 1800.

——— Populus si forte roget, cur
Non, ut porticibus, sic judiciis fruar isdem?
Nec sequar, aut fugiam, quæ diligit ipse, vel odit?
Olim quod vulpes ægroto cauta leoni
Respondit, referam; quia me vestigia terrent
Omnia te adversum spectantia, nulla retrorsum.

The First Volume of the DRAMATIC CENSOR being now completed, the work may be had, either in separate Numbers, or in Sets, half-bound, price Seven Shillings, by applying to the Publishers, J. ROACH, Russel-court, Drury-lane; or C. CHAPPLE, 66, Pall Mall.

DRURY-LANE, FRIDAY, *May* 2, 1800.

DE MONTFORT—*J. P. Kemble.* CITIZEN—*A. Murphy.*

WHEN we last week deferred our strictures on this Play, we were in hopes of obtaining an opportunity of balancing the respective claims of the Author and the Adapter, by comparing the printed *original* with the *representation*. In this hope, however, we have been disappointed, the Tragedy being out of print, and either lent out to read, or not composing a part of the catalogue of the diffe-

rent circulating libraries to which we have applied. We have, therefore, no alternative left, but to proceed upon the same principle on which we have acted in similar cases, and which we laid down in our remarks on Mrs. INCHBALD's *Wise Man of the East*—See the satirical Poem, entitled *The Apparition of Zoroaster, to the Theatrical Midwife of Leicester Fields*, page 73—

> " *Be this a truth to all Play-mongers known,*
> " *Whatever they adopt, becomes their own.*"

Applying this principle, therefore, in its most unlimited extent, to Mr. KEMBLE, we must hold that gentleman equally responsible for what he *retains*, as for what he *adds*. Vested with full power of *rejection* or *admission*—holding, as it were, the keys to *lock out*, or *let in*—he must equally participate in the *censure*, or the *praise*, due to the work to which he lends his sanction, and his fosterage.

We shall not enlarge upon the plot, which, as we have already observed in our last, is barren of incident, and, therefore, unworthy of minute detail. The language, likewise, has been sufficiently animadverted upon. It exhibits many specimens of a refined and classical style; but this is a recommendation ill calculated to compensate, especially with an English audience, who delight in bustle and intricacy of situation, for the want of interest and variety. In this respect, the new Tragedy partakes of the characteristic features of the French Drama,

Drama, where declamation supplies the place of incident, and complicate developement of plot.

The *characters*, then, will form the leading topic of our disquisitions in the present instance; and, in this point of view, we are sorry to say, we never saw a Tragedy more woefully deficient, more culpably ill-conducted. *De Montfort*, the hero of the piece, is a systematic villain, without one *foil* to his vices. His hatred towards *Rasenfeld* is not the passion of a great and generous soul: it originates in a mean sordid jealousy; he challenges his rival to personal combat, and owes his forfeit life to the forbearance of his adversary. Yet this magnanimity, on the part of *Rasenfeld*, has no effect on the impenetrable feelings of *De Montfort*: his hatred now grows more fierce and implacable; yet, strange to tell! black and deadly as the Author represents that hate, it is almost instantly soothed and appeased by the intreaties, not of a mistress, but a sister. A reconciliation next takes place, through that sister's intervention—with what sincerity, on the part of *De Montfort*, we leave our readers to judge—when, at the very moment that he professes friendship, he refuses to ratify those professions by a friend's embrace. A few hours after this event, this magnanimous man, this reconciled enemy, suffers himself to be wrought up to such a paroxysm of rage and revenge, by a forged and clumsy tale (to which he lends an eager ear with a degree of credulity, bordering upon weakness, that tends to

render his character still more despicable), that, forgetful of oaths, protestations, and every tie which honour and duty can impose, he challenges his rival under his own roof; and, when the latter nobly declines the contest with a mad-man, displays himself not only a villain, but a rank coward, and resolves upon assassination. He perpetrates the murder—not in the moment of passion, but cooly, deliberately, and by plan—and now, instead of being held up to detestation, he is extolled as a paragon of virtue, and a long harangue made on his noble qualities, not one of which he demonstrates by his actions. Instead of incurring the punishment of his crime, and being made an example to society, he is relieved from ignominy, dies of a broken heart, and is pompously lamented, instead of being execrated and despised. So much for the *morality* of the Drama; not to mention the absurdity and absolute contradiction, in attributing such fine feelings to a man who could descend to such meanness, such cowardice, such base and infamous villainy.

Rasenfeld possesses some *traits* of nobleness and magnanimity; but his character is unnecessarily degraded, and lessened in esteem, by the petulance of his disposition. He, likewise, betrays a want of caution, incompatible with just delineation of character, in exposing himself to the danger of assassination, after the emphatic warning given him by *Count Albert*, and which so perfectly corresponds

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with the behaviour of *De Montfort*, that *Rasenfeld* instinctively exclaims—"Sure, he will not *murder* me!"—to which *Albert* makes reply, by observing, that he will not be answerable for the consequences; at the same time plainly intimating his suspicions of foul play.

Jane De Montfort is a true romance-heroine, who deals in sentiment by wholesale, and makes a long preachment to palliate murder, and depicts an assassin like a saint!

The rest of the characters are mere *cyphers* in the account. In fact, the Tragedy of *De Montfort* is a true *family* Play, the avowed aim of which seems to have been the exhibiting of the *KEMBLES to advantage, by putting an *extinguisher* on all the rest of the Performers.

As for the Play itself, it is difficult to ascertain to what class of the Drama it properly belongs. The bills of the Theatre announce it under the title of a Tragedy; but, baiting the heaviness and dull solemnity of the piece, it seems to be a heterogeneous compound of Tragedy, Comedy, Farce, Opera, Pantomime, and Puppet-Shew; in which dancing, feasting, revelry, *drunken songs*, screech-owls, murders, funeral processions, music and lamentations, are promiscuously jumbled together. It has all the

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* The part of *Rasenfeld* was originally intended for Mr. C. KEMBLE; but that gentleman being prevented from acting by indisposition, the character devolved upon its present representative, Mr. TALBOT.

dullness

dullness of the *Laureat's* late production, without half its merit.

Among the Performers, Mr. KEMBLE takes the undisputed lead. His acting is the chief recommendation the Play possesses. Mr. TALBOT has the next best *male* part, in which he acquits himself with address; and would succeed still better, if he did not, by an affectation of ease, degenerate into slovenliness. His pronunciation is distinct, but rather too flippant.

Mrs. SIDDONS, as *Jane de Montfort*, has ample scope for her powers; but she is apt to fall at times into *rant* and exaggerated declamation. We must, likewise, notice an impropriety in her dress, which destroys the illusion of the scene. She is very anxious to have an interview with her brother, without being known to him; and for this purpose asks the *Countess Albert*, whether *masks* will be worn at the entertainment, where she proposes to meet him? The *Countess* replies in the negative, but recommends to her to conceal her face in the *double* foldings of a veil: a proposal in which *Lady Jane* cheerfully acquiesces. She makes her appearance, however, soon after, with no other concealment than a *single* veil, of so *thin* a texture, that all her features are recognized; nor does she even attempt to disguise her voice. Yet this clumsy stratagem imposes on *De Montfort*, and prevents him from knowing his sister.

DOWTON's character of *Jerome*, is a palpable copy

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of *Adam* in the *Iron Chest*, and the performer over-acts his part in a manner, which completely turns it into farce. BARRYMORE has little or nothing to do, but to strut upon the stage; and CAULFIELD's part, as *Conrad*, is an absolute excrescence, which not only requires the pruning knife, but ought to be totally lopped off.

Miss HEARD appears in a very grand and elegant dress, as the *Countess Albert*; but has a very insignificant part to sustain. She seems, in fact, like the rest of the performers, unconnected with the KEMBLES, to be introduced for the express purpose of serving as a foil to the *family*. This Actress has, latterly, laboured very assiduously, and almost constantly, in the dramatic vineyard, her name, with very few exceptions, being in every bill, either in the Play or Entertainment, and not unfrequently in both. It is to be hoped, that the Proprietors do not confine their notice of her *usefulness* to the imposition of additional labour, without having due respect to the well-known aphorism—"*the labourer is worthy of proportionate hire!*"

The scenery to the new Tragedy reflects great credit on the artists. The interior perspective of the convent, in particular, ranks among the grandest scenes the stage can boast. We have only to regret, that the piece is not more worthy of the embellishments bestowed upon it.

COVENT-

COVENT-GARDEN, FRIDAY, *May* 2, 1800.

DESERTED DAUGHTER—*Holcroft.* NETLEY ABBEY —*Pearce.*

THE performances of this evening were for the Benefit of Mrs. MATTOCKS, who sustained the part of *Mrs. Sarsnet*. A new performer made her first appearance, in the character of *Joanna*. The interlude of the *Social Songsters* followed between the Play and the Farce.

DRURY-LANE, SATURDAY, *May* 3, 1800.

DE MONTFORT—*J. P. Kemble.* OF AGE TO-MORROW.

IT may justly be considered as a bad omen of the success of the new Tragedy, when it is found necessary to call in the aid of such a vile *farrago* of folly and absurdity, as the Entertainment of this evening. The crowded houses, and unbounded applause, with which *De Montfort* continues to be received, are unhappily confined to the *Play-bill's*. The *Theatre* exhibits "a beggarly account of empty boxes!"

Mrs. SIDDONS fatigued herself so much with her exertions, in the character of *Jane De Montfort*, that she was unable to speak the *Epilogue*. An apology was accordingly made for its omission, and very favourably received by a drowsy audience, who were happy to find the Tragedy had reached its conclusion.

COVENT-

COVENT-GARDEN, SATURDAY, *May* 3, 1800.

SPEED THE PLOUGH—*Morton.* PAUL AND VIRGINIA—*Cobb.*

IT is solely to its musical and scenic attractions, that the new Entertainment is indebted for the favourable reception it experiences. We have already observed, that the author is entitled to very little commendation for the share *he* has taken in its production. The dialogue is flimsy, stale, and inelegant —the plot improbable and ill-conducted. *Paul* and *Virginia* are brought up and educated together, as brother and sister, for fifteen years; and it is not till *Virginia's* sixteenth birth-day (the very identical day with which the piece opens) that they are undeceived as to their supposed consanguinity. Brotherly and sisterly affection, by an instantaneous metamorphosis, converts into the more tender passion of sexual love, and (as "*it never rains, but it pours,*" as a very wise proverb informs us) that selfsame day a letter is received from *Virginia's* aunt, in Spain, apprizing her niece of her parentage and connexions, and ordering her return to Europe. *Don Antonio*, the intended husband of *Virginia*, is a passenger in the vessel which brings this letter. He applies to the governor of the island for a guard to assist in carrying off his intended bride, who no sooner is conveyed on board, than a dreadful hurricane commences; the ship is wrecked, and *Virginia*, in the very jaws of death, is rescued by the

intervention of her lover, and a party of friends headed by a run-away slave, whose pardon she had procured from his master. The following is a list of the *Dramatis Personæ*—

Don Antonio, - - - - -	Mr. HILL.
Tropic, - - - - - - -	Mr. TOWNSEND.
Paul, - - - - - - -	Mr. INCLEDON.
Dominique, - - - - - -	Mr. MUNDEN.
Alambra, - - - - - -	Mrs. MILLS.
Diego, - - - - - - -	Mr. EMERY.
Virginia, - - - - - -	Mrs. H. JOHNSTON.
Jacintha, - - - - - -	Mrs. ATKINS.
Mary, - - - - - - -	Miss SIMS.

MUNDEN, who sustains the part of *Dominique*, the servant of *Paul* and *Virginia*, and to whom the secret of *Virginia's* parentage is confided, has a humorous song in the first act—"When the moon shines o'er the deep,"—which affords him a fair opportunity for drollery and grimace. *Tropic* is a benevolent planter, master to the run-away slave *Alambra*, who appears to possess a heart too feeling for a *slave-holder*. Mr. TOWNSEND performs the character very ably, and sings with spirit and effect a patriotic song, comparing Great Britain to a man of war—"Long may she ride a peerless first-rate, with a gallant crew, and a beloved commander!"

Mr. INCLEDON, as we already observed, has some very charming airs. We need not add, that he sings them in the happiest style.

Mr. EMERY, as *Diego*, looks and acts the part of a stern, savage, unrelenting task-master. The rest

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of the *male* performers, with HILL and CLAREMONT at their head, are mere walking characters, who strut and fret a few moments on the stage, and then are neither heard nor thought of more. They are exactly what their dress makes them.

Of the female performers, Mrs. MILLS is entitled to the greatest share of commendation, for her spirited acting in the character of *Alambra*. This lady appears to great advantage in the disguise of man's attire. Mrs. H. JOHNSTON does justice to the *prose dialogue* of the piece; but her vanity, in attempting a *singing* character, equally provokes our pity and contempt. Mr. MAZZINGHI's sweet notes, in the supplicatory air towards the close of the first act—"Ah! could my *faultering* tongue impart, &c."—are absolutely thrown away. Mrs. H. JOHNSTON gives us the mere *ghost* of a song! Such we may suppose to have been the dying, *faultering* strains of *Echo*, in the last stage of her mortal existence, in the very *crisis* of her metamorphosis, when, pining for *Narcissus*, she dwindled away into an empty sound. This lady exhibited another proof of her arrogance and presumption, by coming on the stage the first night with a *tambourine* in her hand, which she had not the skill to touch. She was very properly laughed out of her folly by the newspapers, and has left the tambourine behind her on the succeeding representations.

Miss SIMS and Mrs. ATKINS are introduced for the mere purpose of singing. The latter lady, in

particular, has not the smallest connexion with the plot of the piece.

The scenery is picturesque and pleasing, particularly the opening view of the country, with *Virginia's* cottage on the right-hand; and the view of *Tropic's* plantation The concluding scene, which exhibits a rocky coast, and the sea agitated by a storm, with the shipwreck of the vessel, is grand and awful.

Ere we conclude our remarks, we must observe, that the author has copiously interlarded his piece with political allusions, and high-seasoned sentiments, which are crammed and foisted into the Drama—whether applicable, or not—whether analogous, or not analagous to the situation—for the purpose of entrapping applause from weak minds, who never look below the surface. As spectators of this description compose, by far, the greatest proportion of the audience, we need not wonder at the success of such silly productions. The man, who has no pretensions to *literary* merit, no *literary* character to maintain, may easily patch together a modern Drama, whether Tragedy or Comedy, Opera or Farce: and the vilest Grub-Street Poetaster, that ever tagged a string of rhymes together, may write such songs as Mr. COBB has furnished for *Paul and Virginia*—they have neither metre, sense, nor rhyme, to recommend them.

DRURY.

DRURY-LANE, MONDAY, *May* 5, 1800.

DE MONTFORT—*J. P. Kemble.* OF AGE TO MORROW.

IF Mrs. Siddons, who took her benefit this evening, placed her hopes of success on the attractions of the new Tragedy, she was woefully deceived in her appreciation of its merit. She was honoured with a fashionable, but not a numerous house.

COVENT-GARDEN, MONDAY, *May* 5, 1800.

THE GOOD-NATURED MAN—*Dr. Goldsmith.* PAUL AND VIRGINIA—*Cobb.*

WE are much pleased with the revival of this sprightly Comedy. It possesses more genuine humour, than any dozen of our modern dramas put together. Mr. LEWIS was peculiarly happy in his delineation of the character of *Lofty*; and Mr. MUNDEN, as *Old Croaker*, literally set the house in a roar. The *ci-devant* Miss BETTERTON throws too much flippancy into the part of *Miss Richland.*

DRURY-LANE, TUESDAY, *May* 6, 1800.

DE MONTFORT—*J. P. Kemble.* THE WEDDING DAY —*Mrs. Inchbald.*

MR. KING re-assumed the part of *Sir Adam* in the Entertainment.

COVENT-GARDEN, TUESDAY, *May* 6, 1800.

HEIR AT LAW—*Colman.* CASTLE OF SORRENTO.

THIS popular Comedy was performed at this Theatre a second time, by permission of the Proprietors

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of the Haymarket Theatre, for the Benefit of Mr. JOHNSTONE, who performs the part of *Kenrick*, with characteristic humour.

A variety of favourite songs were introduced between the Play and the Entertainment, under the title of *Revived Anacreontics*.

DRURY-LANE, WEDNESDAY, *May* 7, 1800.

DE MONTFORT—*J. P. Kemble.* OF AGE TO-MORROW.

To judge from symptoms, which grow more prominent and alarming every night, the new Tragedy has not much longer to linger out a miserable existence.

COVENT-GARDEN, WEDNESDAY, *May* 7.

THE WOODMAN—*Dudley Bate.* THE JEW AND THE DOCTOR—*Dibdin.*

IN consequence of Mrs. MARTYR'S *accouchement*, on the very night of her own Benefit, the part of *Dolly* was sustained by Miss SIMS. An *ephemeral* interlude, entitled the *Siege of Acre*, followed the Play, in which some of Mr. DIBDIN'S most popular Songs were pressed into the service. The piece concluded with a representation of the *storming* of Acre by the French, and the *sortie* of the Turks. Smoke, noise, and bustle, are sure to command the applause of the multitude; all comment, therefore, on the subject, would be superfluous.

The *Jew and the Doctor* is the best production of Mr.

Mr DIBDIN's pen. This gentleman is not utterly devoid of ability; but if he persists in multiplying his dramas so rapidly as he has hitherto done, and brings forward his *crudities* with so little modesty and sense of shame, we may safely venture to predict, that his dramatic career will be short, and not happily terminated.

DRURY-LANE, THURSDAY, *May* 8, 1800.

BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE—*Mrs. Centlivre.* MY GRANDMOTHER—*P. Hoare.*

WE have to regret the illness of Mr. AICKIN, in a two-fold point of view: in the first place, from respect to a gentleman, universally beloved and esteemed, both in his *private* and his *official* capacity; and secondly, because his absence is a loss to the interest of every piece in which he sustains a character. Mr. HOLLINGSWORTH poorly compensates for the absence of Mr. AICKIN, as the representative of *Obadiah Prim.*

Mr. DE CAMP performed the part of *Vapour*, in the Entertainment.

COVENT-GARDEN, THURSDAY, *May* 8, 1800.

GOOD-NATURED MAN—*Dr. Goldsmith.* PAUL AND VIRGINIA—*Cobb.*

THE Royal Family visited the Theatre this evening, and appeared highly amused with the performances.

DRAMATIC

DRAMATIC INTELLIGENCE, CORRESPONDENCE, &c.

The LORD CHAMBERLAIN has this week given his long-expected award on the subject of the dispute between the Proprietors, and "*the glorious eight*" *discontented* Performers of Covent-Garden Theatre. The result is such as might have been expected from the circumstances of the case, and the high character of that tribunal, to which the decision of the controversy, by mutual consent, has been transferred. His Lordship cautiously avoids all reference to the PATENT; well aware that, as a question of law and of right, the dispute does not come within the pale of his jurisdiction—does not admit of his interference. He comes forward, solely and entirely, in the character of an *arbitrator*; not as a judge, *ex officio*; but as an umpire, *by commission*; as a mediator between guilt and punishment. The complaints and alledged grievances of the *malecontents*, are discussed *seriatim*, and judgment given *against* them in every one instance. His Lordship justifies the Proprietors in every step they have taken — the encreased expence of a *Benefit*—the restriction, with respect to *Orders*—the augmented *Fine*, for the refusal of a character—the *Prerogative* of the Proprietors to distribute the parts of a Play, as seemeth most prudent to themselves—the inforcement of the *Sick Clause*—with various subordinate

nate causes of alledged complaint, are severally investigated and pronounced to be not only strictly just and proper, but indispensibly necessary to the maintenance of good order, good government, authority, and rule, in the management of the Theatre. At the same time his Lordship, with a spirit of benevolence that does credit to his rank and station, recommends an *amnesty*, and hopes the past will be buried in oblivion.

Subjoined to the LORD CHAMBERLAIN'S award, is a communication from the counsel employed on this occasion, recommending implicit acquiescence in his Lordship's decision; and desiring, as the strongest proof of such acquiescence, that no more appeals may be made to the public.

The following is a copy of his LORDSHIP'S award, together with the annexed document from Mr. ESTCOURT—

" I have read the several Papers submitted to my perusal by the PROPRIETORS of Covent Garden Theatre, and JOHN JOHNSTONE, JOSEPH GEORGE HOLMAN, ALEXANDER POPE, CHARLES INCLEDON, JOSEPH S. MUNDEN, JOHN FAWCETT, THOMAS KNIGHT, and HENRY E. JOHNSTON, Eight of the Performers, and at their request I have taken into consideration the matters in difference between them, upon which my opinion is as follows:

" One of the principal matters of complaint, on the part of the Performers, appears to arise from the charge on their Benefits. This, I observe, has been usually settled by particular agreement between them and the Proprietors; and by articles under which many of the Performers are now engaged, such charge is fixed at £140.—But it appears that before the commencement of the pre-

sent season, notice was given that the charge in future would be £160. Without doubt, therefore, the additional charge cannot vary any prior agreement; but with respect to subsequent engagements, I do not think it unreasonable, on the part of the Proprietors, to stipulate with Performers for the payment of £160. as a fixed charge on their Benefits.

" The other objections made to the regulations and conduct of the Proprietors, on the subject of Benefits, do not seem to me to be well founded; but I recommend it to the Proprietors to give a month's notice of Benefit Nights, if that shall be considered by the Performers as more for their advantage than a notice of three weeks.

" With respect to Orders, which the Performers claim for admission of their friends to the Theatre, I think it unquestionably must be left to the Proprietors to issue them at such times, and to such extent, and on such terms as they shall think proper.

" The Fine for Refusal of a Character, and the Forfeiture of Salary during the illness of a Performer, are very proper subjects of agreement between the parties; and I think the Proprietors act prudently in requiring that what is called the Sick Clause in the Article shall be continued, and in raising the Fine to £30.— But such increased Fine cannot affect prior engagements.

" As to the right claimed by the Performers of keeping a cast of characters, and their objection to the Proprietor's right of dismissing them, it appears to me to be absolutely necessary for the good management of the Theatre, that the Proprietors should have the power of dismissing Performers at the expiration of particular engagements; and of employing them, while engaged, in such characters as the Proprietors shall think proper. And I find that the Proprietors disclaim all compact* with Drury-Lane Theatre, for the purpose of precluding a Performer dismissed from one Theatre, from being employed at the other.

" The claim of Gloves, Ribbons, &c. ought to be stipulated for

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* The PATENT insists, that no Performer belonging to one Theatre, shall be engaged by the other, without the express leave of the *Governor* of the Theatre, from which such Performer secedes.

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by the Performers in their agreements, if they think it material to require a supply of these articles; but they cannot otherwise be expected from the Proprietors.

" It is not to be supposed, that the Proprietors will seek unnecessary occasions of closing the Theatre on any nights during the season; but no doubt can be entertained of their right to close the Theatre at such times as they shall think necessary for their own advantage; and such part of the Performers' salary as is made payable each night on which a Theatrical performance shall be exhibited, must, of course, cease when the Theatre is closed.

" These are my sentiments on the several subjects of complaint brought forward by the above-named Performers against the Proprietors, from which it appears that in my opinion they are by no means well-founded; but I cannot omit this opportunity of recommending to all parties an oblivion of what has passed in the course of these disputes, being desirous of restoring peace and harmony to a Theatre, which so largely contributes to the amusement of the public. SALISBURY." (L. S.)

Arlington-street, May 3, 1800

" GENTLEMEN,

" By the direction of the Marquis of SALISBURY, I send you his Lordship's opinion on the matters submitted by you and the Proprietors of Covent Garden Theatre to his judgment; and as his Lordship has been induced to take this trouble, in consequence of the express agreement of both Proprietors and Performers to acquiesce in his determination, I am directed to inform both parties, that his Lordship has the fullest reliance on their adhering to such agreements, and that their acquiescence will be most properly shown, by forbearing from all further appeals to the public on the subjects of difference between them.

" I am, Gentlemen,

" Your obedient servant,

" EDMUND ESTCOURT."

To the Performers of the Theatre Royal,
Covent Garden.

Lincoln's Inn, May 3, 1800,

Having, ourselves, taken an active part in this dispute, not *precipitately* and *wantonly*, but from motives of imperious necessity, in consequence of the rashness and indiscretion of the *Performers*, in forestalling the verdict of the CHAMBERLAIN, and obtruding their quarrels upon the public; we cannot refrain from congratulating the Proprietors on the issue of a dispute, which threatened such serious involvement to the Theatre. The triumph of *right* over *wrong*; of *justice* over *aggression*; of *equity* over *usurpation*; affords legitimate ground for exultation. The issue of the present controversy, we hope, will prove of great and permanent benefit, by clearly defining and ascertaining the rights of both parties; and thus nip, in the bud, the germe of future insurrection and sedition. The Performers must now be aware, that there is a material difference between *agency* and *proprietorship*; that they are the *servants* of the Theatre, in consideration of fair and liberal wages, not *partners in the firm*, without the expence of purchase, and exonerated from the risque of contingencies. It is one of the most essential requisites to the preservation of peace and good order in all great concerns, that every party should know his exact place and station, the duties incumbent upon him, and the compensation he has to expect in return. This grand object, we trust, is now, with respect to the government of a Theatre, fully and permanently accomplished.

We must, likewise, congratulate ourselves on the issue

issue of a dispute, into which we have so largely entered, and in which we are happy to find the line of conduct we pursued, justified by such high and respectable authority. It would, indeed, be a species of *literary prudery*, were we to dissemble the triumph we feel on this occasion. Of all the different periodical vehicles of criticism, our work is the *only one*, that has *manfully* taken up the question. We have not fought under *false colours*; we have not waged *anonymous* warfare; we have not contented ourselves with letting off a few occasional *squibs* and *crackers*; but have followed up a regular successive train of argument, and gone *seriatim* through the whole of the *Malecontent* Manifesto, with our name prefixed to every Number of the Work. We have been the only champions that have dared *openly* to encounter popular prejudice, and, at our own personal loss, vindicate the Proprietors of the Theatre against aspersion and misrepresentation.

That *jesuitical*, that *unprincipled* paper, *The True Briton*, has occasionally superficially skimmed and dipped into the matter, under the safeguard of a *fictitious* signature. The *anonymous* writer, who assumes the title of an *Old Observer*, has "*ploughed liberally with our heifer*," and seizing on the most prominent features of our *Strictures*, vamped up, ever and anon, a *Letter* on the subject of this Theatrical controversy, in which the writer retails the arguments brought forward by ourselves, and repeats, with as good grace as he can, the lesson he has been taught by us. This

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is the common practice of *newspaper scribblers*, and therefore we make no objection to it. We are in the precise situation of the writer, who observes, "Provided truth be promulgated, it is of little consequence from what quarter it proceeds." We arrogate no *merit* to ourselves in following the line of duty, and of right; and we sincerely rejoice to see others tread the same path, whatever may be their original motives and inducements.

☞ We have received a *threatening* letter from Mr. PARIS, *demanding* the *insertion* of the Epistle, on which we slightly commented in our last; and in case of non-compliance with that requisition, insisting on our leaving the *original* with our publisher, for general inspection. We have two observations to make, in answer to this *cavalier* request. In the first place, we have long ago put this gentleman's letter to *that* use, for which it seemed most appropriate! and, secondly, we must beg leave to inform this irritable correspondent, that we are not to be *bullied* into compliance. We are prepared for *extremities*; and shall, therefore, only briefly inform him, that whatever we have the *heart* to write, we have the *arm* to justify.

FINE

FINE ARTS, &c.

EXHIBITION OF THE ROYAL ACADEMY, FOR THE YEAR 1800.

NUMBER II.

WE concluded our Strictures on the ROYAL ACADEMY in our last Number, with a heavy charge against the institution, purporting, that the establishment had been totally perverted from its original design, and its funds grossly misapplied. This charge it now behoves us to make good, that we may not ourselves be arraigned of false accusation, of libel, and precipitancy.

To probe the sore to the bottom, and effect a full exposure of that complicated system of chicanery, abuse, and ill-management, which has frustrated the liberal intentions of the founders of the institution, would require a greater proportion of time, as well as of room, than we, in the present stage of the business, can conveniently spare. But we pledge ourselves, when the Exhibition closes, and when, of course, we shall have done with the *individual* works of art, of which the present Exhibition is composed, to canvass the question upon a broad scale, upon bold and independant principles. Mean while, we shall take a transient review of the several causes and effects, which reciprocally promote and result from that system of perversion and abuse,

which

which we have stated, and now confidently re-state, does actually exist.

It has already been shown, that NATURE, by furnishing man with a craving appetite, sufficiently stimulates him to exercise the means of satisfying that craving appetite, without the co-operation of a ROYAL ACADEMY. The only practical benefit, therefore, which can result from a *public* institution, must be this; to give a bias to *individual* exertion, and to exempt the profession from the necessity of preferring *self* to every other consideration; by supplying the want of *private* patronage; and by enabling the *individual* to follow his art, with a view to *national* honour and *national* improvement, without incurring the loss of *private* interest and emolument. This object can only be accomplished, by offering adequate premiums and rewards for the higher and nobler branches of the art; for works, which involve mind, historical knowledge, antiquity, manners, customs, &c. &c.; rewards and honours, which shall at once excite a spirit of active competition, and secure, not only the *successful*, but *every meritorious* candidate, against the contingency of loss by his patriotic efforts. The history of our own country furnishes sufficient topics to call into action every faculty of the soul, every power of the mind, every professional acquirement, and the whole force of talent, which individuals are capable of possessing.

We are well aware of the reply which will be made to this proposal. We shall be told, of the heavy

heavy expence attendant on such a system of procedure. We shall be told, that the funds of the institution are wholly inadequate to the execution of such a measure; that the ACADEMY has already a sufficient call upon its revenues; with various other pleas of a similar nature. All this we readily admit; and 'tis of this very circumstance we complain, that the funds of the ACADEMY are so ill-managed and directed; so shamefully misapplied, either to frivolous pursuits, or to the purpose of *private aggrandizement* and *monopoly*, as to leave no resource for measures of *public* good, of *national* importance. *Self* appears to be the ruling principle of the ACADEMY—*self* it is, that influences all their actions—*self* betrays its *cloven foot* in all their proceedings, even to the very printing of the *Exhibition-Catalogue*, in which the eye of modesty is outraged with the exhibition of the names of the R.A. artists, in *large capital letters*, whilst the body of the profession pass muster in a *small type!*—*Self* it is, which suggests the exclusion of the very artists, at whose expence they are feasting, from whose labours they derive their revenues, and their *self-bestowed annuities*—*self* it is, that suggests the exclusion of these artists from the *Academy dinner*, given prior to the opening of the Exhibition, and to which the Academicians are very careful to invite men of rank, fashion, and fortune, in order to *monopolize their custom*, and keep the rest of the profession, as much as they can, from a participation in the fair fruits of the harvest.

We have already observed, that the limits of our publication will not permit us to canvass the question in *detail* at the present moment, as we wish to bestow as much attention as practicable upon the *Pictures* now submitted to public inspection. We shall therefore only add, that when this part of our plan shall be completed, which of course it will be when the Exhibition closes, we shall then point out distinctly, and at sufficient length, the several modes in which the funds of the Academy are misapplied; and doubt not, but we shall prove to conviction, that the revenues of the institution are fully adequate to every great and patriotic system of improvement, if those revenues were more judiciously managed, and more uprightly directed to purposes of *national* concern. A dissertation of this nature, pointing out the radical defects of the ACADEMY, will come very aptly, as a kind of winding-up of our Strictures on the Exhibition of that ACADEMY, and will serve to illustrate the remarks we may have occasion to make on *individual* works, the character and complexion of which are, in a great degree, affected by the prevailing character and practice of the ACADEMY itself.

For the present, therefore, we shall leave the ACADEMY in repose, and enter upon a Review of the Works of Art, which compose the Exhibition of this year, briefly premising, that with the exception of the *Model* Academy, which certainly boasts a more respectable appearance than formerly, the

Exhibition

Exhibition, on the whole, instead of surpassing that of the preceding year, falls sadly short of it. It may, likewise, not be altogether superfluous to remark, that the great number of Pictures which behang the rooms, renders it impossible to notice every article in the catalogue, and compels us not only to a very circumscribed *selection*, but even with respect to that very selection itself, to glean only the most prominent features. We proceed, therefore, to a *specific Review*.

No. 1. *Portrait of the Lord-Mayor.*—B. BURNELL.

THIS is a whole-length, and, though liable to considerable censure in the detail, upon the whole a work of merit. In reference to the official capacity of the original, we must condemn the attitude, which is violent and repulsive—circumstances certainly not analogous to the character of a magistrate. The extreme severity of the countenance is enough to strike terror into the breast of the boldest criminal; nay, to appal even innocence itself: and the Bacchanalian tinge, which suffuses the face, adds to its ferocity. We must likewise notice a defect in the drawing of the right arm, which appears, on a first view, too short, rather than foreshortened. Indeed, the colouring is altogether too sombre, and too monotonous. The mace and other *insignia* of office have a dirty appearance.

No. 4. *Re-appearance of Euphrosyne, from the Vision of Harmodius.* —S. SHELLEY.

THIS picture affords much room for commendation. The attitude is tasty and well-conceived; but the colouring is rather heavy.

No. 5. *Portraits of Mrs. Hill and child.*—SIR W. BEECHEY, R. A.

THIS artist has employed his pencil this year to good effect.

The figures are well grouped, but the portrait of the lady would have been considerably improved by a slight inclination of the head. The colour of the drapery is carried too much into the shadow, which destroys the repose of the picture. We must likewise observe, that, in its present situation, it appears to want force; but this is only a *local* defect, not imputable to the Painter, but resulting from a circumstance, which it is proper to point out to our readers; to wit, the general character of the surrounding pictures, which not only possess the extreme of light and shade, but such a *violence* of colour, as almost deadens the sense of vision.

No. 8. *The Harvest-man's Farewell.*—W. R. Bigg, A.

Treated with all that simplicity which the subject requires, and for which this Artist is so deservedly celebrated. The affectionate looks of the several members of the family are happily expressed; and the whole presents a pleasing descriptive picture of the retired scenes of private life.

No. 9. *The Rope-bridge at Serinugur, in the Sevalic Mountains, &c.* —T. Daniel, R. A.

This picture, independant of professional merit, is entitled to notice in an historical and topographical point of view. The scene is truly picturesque; the tone of colour rich, deep, and mellow; and the water clear and well handled.

No. 11. *The Death of General Fraser, 7th October, 1777.* —S. Woodforde.

This is the best picture we remember to have seen from the pencil of this Artist. The figures are well grouped, interesting, and appear to sympathize deeply in the melancholy incident. The *chiaro-scuro* is broad, and the colouring at once brilliant and chaste.

No. 12. *Portrait of his Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence.* —M. A. Shee, R. A.

This is a tribute of gratitude, on behalf of the merchants of Liverpool, for the active part which his Royal Highness took in vindicating

vindicating the traffic in human flesh and blood!—a traffic, odious and detestable in the eye of Reason and Humanity, but in which the Liverpool merchants (to the shame of the national character) speculate to a great extent.

Laying aside, however, all comment, and considering the picture merely as a work of art, we are sorry to say, that it by no means meets our unqualified approbation. The attitude is neither easy nor elegant; and the right leg is thrown so far back, as to convey an unpleasant idea of the figure in general, which appears to have lost the centre of gravity. It is, in other respects, painted with a firm, broad pencil; but the red predominates too much. In former Exhibitions we have taken occasion to commend this Artist for his *chasteness* of colouring; but now that he has commenced R. A. he seems to be imitating the example of the *President*, and lays on his red lead with as lavish a hand as the first-rate dauber in the Academy:—witness his curtain in the present picture.

No. 13 and 14. *Portrait of Master M. P. Rickett. Ditto of Master F. P. Rickett.*—W. Owen.

Broad, spirited, and well handled.

No. 16. *Portraits of Mrs. Scott Waring, and children.*—J. Russell, R. A.

We notice this article, as being the production of a Royal Academician; but, whether it be above or below criticism, we leave the Public to determine. It certainly affords a convincing proof, that *merit* is not the *only* passport to Academic honours!

No. 17. *Puppanussum; a water-fall within the Tinevelly district, in the East Indies.*—T. Daniel, R. A.

The observation which we prefixed to our remarks (on No. 9, by this Artist), applies to the present work, as being an article of topographical knowlege. As a picture, it is equally entitled to praise: the whole effect of colour is charming; the light and shade are judiciously blended; and the water, in particular, handled in a masterly style.

No.

No. 23. *The Birth of the Thames.*—Mrs. Cosway.

It affords us peculiar pleasure to have so fair an opportunity of paying the just tribute of applause to female excellence, especially when we see the powers of the Artist exerted on a subject which involves *mind*, and a cultivated imagination. The idea is truly poetical; the figures grouped with great taste, and correctly drawn; the emblems classical and appropriate, and the whole finished in an agreeable tone of colour. The countenance of the infant River-God breathes an air of boldness and conscious superiority, highly characteristic of the majestic river it typifies.

No. 24. *Portrait of Earl Spencer.*—J. S. Copley, R. A.

The Artist cannot be accused of flattery in the present article; though, as far as mere copying is concerned, we must do him the justice to say that he has produced a likeness. The attitude is ungraceful; the colouring uniformly dirty; and the curtain, which in the works of many of the R. A. Artists appears to be of equal consequence with the figure, peculiarly unfortunate. It has a faded look, and stands in need of the *dyer*.

No. 28. *Portrait of Mr. Boucherette's children.*—
T. Lawrence, R. A.

Separately considered, the parts of this picture are fine, and the light and shade ably managed; but, as a *whole*, it is a very indifferent performance. The children, instead of being grouped with taste, are scattered about here and there, like plumbs in an *economical* pudding. The centre-girl is placed in a very ungraceful attitude.

No 31. *A Landscape.*—N. Dance, Esq. H.

This is a charming picture, a perfect transcript of nature, and may justly be held up as a practical lesson for Artists in the line of landscape-painting. The Artist has, with the happiest address, steered a middle course, and avoided the two extremes into which most practitioners are apt to fall, *glare*, or *monotony* of colour. His

tints

tints are rich, mellow, and true to nature; the scene is interesting, and the whole produces a pleasing effect. When the eye feels tired and outraged with the obtrusive glare of tawdry colours, which offend the sense of vision, here it may turn, and find an agreeable repose.

No. 35. *The Penseroso, from Milton.*—J. F. RIGAUD, R. A.

PENSEROSO, with a witness!—It looks more like a Nun, taking advantage of the French Revolution, to steal from her convent, and play the merry *Allegro* in the "busy haunts of *men!*"

No. 39. *Portrait of Mr. Smith.*—J. OPIE, R. A.

A FORCIBLE head, with great expression of countenance, but hard in the handling. The shadows of the face are as dark as the ground, which of course gives them the appearance of *holes.*

No. 43. *Portrait of Miss F. Kemble.*—T. KEARSLEY.

THE attitude of the figure easy, the effect broad, and the colouring clear.

No. 44. *The Cradle Hymn from Dr. Watts.*—J. NORTHCOTE, R.A.

A PICTURE of considerable merit, possessing great breadth of light and shade. The attitude of the principal figure is well conceived, and the children looking over the cradle, are literally *babes of grace!*

No. 45. *Horses, Cattle, &c.*—Sir F. BOURGEOIS, R. A.

THE colouring much too heavy for evening; the shadows hard and dirty; but the cattle are correctly drawn.

No. 48. *The Bard, from Gray.*—N. FUSELI, R. A.

LIKE many of this Artist's productions, remarkable for *monstrosity!*—(We beg pardon for the use of this term, but we know of none more

more expressive and appropriate).—'Tis a wild, incoherent, extravagant, unnatural idea! The figure appears to have been measured to the capacity of the canvas, under the disadvantage of a want of room. On this principle alone can we account for its distortion. It is literally crammed in; and greatly do we doubt the possibility of twisting the human body into such a cramp and *cork-screw* attitude!

No. 49. *Portrait of Lord Caernarvon.*—Sir W. BEECHEY, R. A.

IT is almost superfluous to add, with respect to the works of this Artist, that the colouring is clear, the attitude easy, and the whole in an agreeable tone.

No. 50. *Portrait of Miss Cooper.*—W. OWEN.

A SPIRITED picture, and well coloured. We have only to object to the arms, which do not appear to be *finished*.

No. 53. *Portrait of Lady G. Gordon.*—J. HOPNER, R. A.

THIS is one of the best whole-lengths in the Exhibition. The colouring is clear, chaste, and true; and the back-ground in a fine, unaffected tone. The Artist has, likewise, disposed of his drapery to good effect, and displayed great skill in the management of the *chiaro-scuro*. The picture would, indeed, be perfect, were it not for an inadvertency in the attitude of the right arm, which appears to be *amputated!*

(To be continued.)

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